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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

MONDAY July 1, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS ABOUT FOOD SUPERSTITIONS." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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You rarely find anyone who admits he's superstitious. But almost everyone has at least a few pet superstitions, whether he knows it or not. Almost everybody holds a few beliefs that don't tally with the facts as the scientists find them. And more often than not, those pet superstitions are about food.

Just for a change, how would you like to try a little test on food superstitions? How would you like to check yourself on 10 common every day superstitions about food? I'll give you 10 questions people often write and ask the U. S. Department of Agriculture. You answer each one "Yes," or "No." Then I'll go through the questions again with the correct answers from the scientists. Your final score will give you an idea how food-superstitious you are.

All right. Ready for the first question. Here it is: "Does thunder turn milk sour?" That's a question people ask every year about this time. You answer "Yes" or "No."

Here's the second question: "Is it dangerous to eat ice cream or milk and sea food at the same meal?" What do you say--Yes or No?

On to Question No. 3, which is: "Are raw eggs more digestible than cooked eggs?"

Ready now for Question 4? Here it is: "Are bananas hard to digest?" And that brings us to question 5: "Are celery and fish correctly called brain or nerve foods?"

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Oct. 23 & Nov. 28, 1940



Now here comes the sixth question: "Do cherries and milk make a dangerous combination if eaten at the same meal?"

And then comes Question 7: "If clear coffee more stimulating than coffee with sugar and cream in it?"

And the eighth question: "Are foods cooked in aluminum dangerous to health?"

Ninth question: "Is it safe to leave food standing in tin cans after the can has been opened?"

Last question: "Is skimmilk fattening?"

There are 10 of the questions about food people ask over and over again. Now you check your answers with those from scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Let's go back to Question No. 1: "Does thunder turn milk sour?" The answer is: No. Fresh milk kept cold in a good refrigerator won't sour, no matter how the thunder roars. But on warm summer days, the kind of days that often bring thunder showers, you have to look after milk especially carefully. Warmth encourages the growth of the lactic acid bacteria which cause milk to sour.

Now for the second question: "Is it dangerous to eat ice cream or milk and sea food at the same meal?"

The correct answer here is: No--provided the foods themselves are fresh and in good condition. Sea food alone that is even slightly tainted or spoiled may cause a serious digestive upset.

Now comes Question No. 3: "Are raw eggs more digestible than cooked eggs?"

The answer is: No. Soft or properly prepared hard-cooked eggs are more readily digested than raw eggs.

And now for the answer to Question 4. Question 4 is: "Are bananas hard to digest?"

The answer is: No, not if they are ripe. A banana that is ripe enough to have a yellow skin flecked with brown is a wholesome food, easy for even young

children to digest.

And now comes Question 5. "Are celery and fish correctly called brain or nerve foods?" No! is the answer to that. There is no such thing as a brain food. Even if a person were on a starvation diet, his nerve tissues would be the last to suffer from undernourishment.

Question No. 6 is about cherries and milk: "Do cherries and milk make a dangerous combination if eaten at the same meal?"

And the correct answer is: No, cherries and milk or any other acid fruit and milk are perfectly safe to eat at the same time. The acid of the fruit may curdle the milk, but milk curdles when it gets into the stomach anyway. The combination of milk and fruit forms are easily digested curd.

Now for Question 7: Is clear coffee more stimulating than coffee with sugar and cream?"

The answer is "No.". The effect of the caffeine or stimulant in coffee is not changed by sugar or cream.

Question No. 8: "Is there any danger to health from cooking in aluminum?"

The answer is "No." Only very small traces of aluminum salts can possibly get into food from cooking in aluminum. This happens mostly in cooking acid foods in an aluminum pan. Aluminum salts can do no harm in such tiny amounts, so there's no danger to health. But it isn't a good idea to let cooked foods, especially acid ones, stand for many hours in an aluminum kettle.

And here's the ninth question: "Is it safe to let food stand in a tin can after the can is open?"

Is your answer: Yes? That's the answer the food scientists give. They say it is perfectly safe to let food stand in an open tin can if kept cold and covered just as you would keep any other cooked food.

No. 10 and last question: "Is skim milk fattening?"

The answer is: No. Skim milk belongs in a reducing diet because it is low in calories but high in some important food values. It is rich in calcium and other minerals and in several vitamins, and, besides, it's a good protein food. All this holds for buttermilk, too.

Well, now, how's your score? If you have 9 "No's" and one "Yes," give yourself a score of 100% not superstitious about food.

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